

## **Research in Phase II**

### **First Aid Qualitative Research**

Phase II began by addressing the issues relating to First Aid information on product labels. The qualitative research in Phase I found that the consumers tested often referred to the First Aid section on labels only in the event of an emergency or accident. When prompted to read the text during the qualitative survey, however, many of these consumers reported that the phrases on labels that tell them what to do in these types of situations were confusing.

During Phase I, CLI Stakeholders had recommended that one of the goals for Phase II of CLI be to find simpler, clearer ways to provide instructions to consumers about what to do in case of an emergency or accident. In accordance with this goal, the phrase “Statement of Practical Treatment” was replaced by “First Aid.” Furthermore, CLI Stakeholders worked with the EPA’s OPP to update and improve First Aid statements. The CLI team made a decision, based on previous research, to replace the word “physician” with “doctor” and “area of contact” with “skin.”

During Phase II, qualitative consumer research was conducted on a series of proposed First Aid statements, to assess the potential for changing, simplifying, and clarifying these statements. In July of 1997, the CLI conducted 23 follow-up interviews with consumers to test several proposed wordings of First Aid statements. (See Chapter 5 for a full description of the Qualitative First Aid research.) First Aid instructions for all combinations of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act’s (FIFRA’s) toxicity categories and hazard indicators were tested. The Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) proposed an initial set of First Aid statements, with input from industry, the American Poison Control Center, and other CLI Partners and Stakeholders.

Based on the results of these consumer interviews, the EPA revised the First Aid statements. CLI Partners, Task Force members, and Stakeholders, such as the American Red Cross, PPDC, and academia, commented and gave their feedback on these revisions. The statements were subsequently revised one final time, taking all of the feedback into account. The final revisions to the First Aid statements are expected to be released in an OPP *Pesticide Registration (PR)* notice in Fall/Winter 1999. See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the First Aid qualitative research.

### **Quantitative Consumer Research**

Phase I research yielded qualitative results about the circumstances under which consumers read product labels, which parts of labels they pay the most attention to, and satisfaction about current label information and format. Since the qualitative research could not provide quantifiable results, the CLI used quantitative research in Phase II for this purpose.

The quantitative research was a major component of Phase II of the CLI. The research was funded by several CLI industry Partners. The development of the quantitative research, including questionnaire development, was a collaborative group effort involving industry Partners, EPA personnel, Task Force members from the EPA and other federal agencies, (e.g., the (Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)), as well as other interested CLI Stakeholders. The industry Partners hired an independent market research

and polling firm, National Family Opinion (NFO), to conduct the survey. The study design team took direction from the results of the CLI Phase I research, including the many public comments received, as well as input from the various CLI Subgroups (see discussion below) that were meeting at the same time as the survey was being developed and implemented.

The quantitative research consisted of a national survey of consumers. The survey aimed to:

- # collect more data from consumers about potential new label formats and wording changes;
- # benchmark and study current consumer practices and preferences with regard to product labels, to help the CLI determine what other label changes are appropriate and how best to make them;
- # provide information to help the EPA and CLI Project partners consider policy implications and take some immediate actions;
- # assess consumer ability to locate label information;
- # measure consumer comprehension of labels; and
- # provide demographic analysis capability.

The survey was conducted during May and early June 1998. Survey results were analyzed during the Summer of 1998. The survey included questions about how consumers locate label information, how well consumers understand the information, when and where they consult the labels, the relative importance of different kinds of label information, and which information consumers wish to find most quickly. The quantitative portion of the study included both a mailed, written survey instrument and a telephone interview. The study was designed to include a fair representation of low-income, low-education, and ethnic minorities in the U.S. See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of the survey research design, implementation, and results.

## **Qualitative Consumer Mini Focus Groups**

The qualitative research performed in Phase I, backed by Stakeholder comments and the literature review, found that while generally satisfied with the labels, many consumers do not consistently read or understand product labels for household pesticides, insecticides, and hard surface cleaners. This finding was also supported by Phase I Stakeholder comments and the Phase I literature review. Possible reasons that were proposed for this finding included:

- # excessively technical and sometimes obscure wording of information on labels;
- # poor layout and design of information, with inadequate contrast and difficult-to-read type;
- # information that does not address consumers' needs;
- # consumers' lack of understanding of the potential benefits of reading the label information;

- # consumers' lack of motivation to read labels; and
- # general consumer satisfaction with the existing level of information on labels.

Quantitative survey techniques, including those used in Phase II quantitative research, do not lend themselves well to detailed probing of interviewees to uncover why and how they react to a variety of different text phrasings and formats. The CLI felt that a more subjective approach would enlighten certain areas of inquiry. The CLI, therefore, pursued further qualitative research in Phase II to investigate:

- # consumer understanding of where to locate information on product labels;
- # consumer understanding of the meaning of specific phrases;
- # possible alternatives to the way certain label information is stated;
- # how labels can be more clearly designed;
- # consumer interpretation of certain "signal" words, such as DANGER;
- # consumer reactions to the possibility of standardizing label information;
- # consumer reactions to possible logo designs for the Consumer Education Campaign; and
- # compelling motivators for reading and understanding labels.

Qualitative research was funded by the EPA, which hired The Newman Group, Ltd. to conduct the research. The qualitative research took the format of 27 "mini" focus groups, each consisting of 3 to 5 participants, who were purchasers and users of the products under consideration. Nine focus groups were held in each of three cities, Chicago, IL; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; and Dallas, TX, during July and August of 1998. In each city, hard surface cleaners, indoor insecticides, and outdoor pesticides were each covered by three separate focus group discussions. A strong effort was made to represent low-income, less-educated, and minority-group segments of the populations of each city.

See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the Phase II qualitative research design, implementation, and results.